

Once We All Had Gills: Growing Up Evolutionist in an Evolving World

By Rudolf A. Raff

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In this book, Rudolf A. Raff reaches out to the scientifically queasy, using his life story and his growth as a scientist to illustrate why science matters, especially at a time when many Americans are both suspicious of science and hostile to scientific ways of thinking. Noting that science has too often been the object of controversy in school curriculums and debates on public policy issues ranging from energy and conservation to stem-cell research and climate change, Raff argues that when the public is confused or ill-informed, these issues tend to be decided on religious, economic, and political grounds that disregard the realities of the natural world. Speaking up for science and scientific literacy, Raff tells how and why he became an evolutionary biologist and describes some of the vibrant and living science of evolution. Once We All Had Gills is also the story of evolution writ large: its history, how it is studied, what it means, and why it has become a useful target in a cultural war against rational thought and the idea of a secular, religiously tolerant nation.

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Editorial Review

Review

"This is an excellent introduction to evolutionary thinking and an inspiration to those who may be just starting on their career (or those in need of a bit of encouragement to keep plugging along).... Highly recommended." ?Choice

"Raff's book is... a fascinating story of how a young boy interested in natural history became a scientist... and also a polemic arguing about the importance of science and its defense against the powers of ignorance." ?www.skepticblog.org

"Raff has written his story, he tells us, to inspire others to be excited and ask questions and become scientists. Science is fun, and real people do it, he shows us with his stories about the perfectly ordinary and enticing world of nature, science, and discovery." ?Jane Maienschein, author of Whose View of Life? Embryos, Cloning, and Stem Cells

"This biography-history-travelogue-defense-of-science-and-the-scientific-method should appeal to readers of Sean Carroll and Stephen J. Gould?to anyone who is fascinated by scientific exploration.... An engaging story told with verve and style." ?Brian K. Hall, author of Evolution: Principles and Processes

"Science teachers and students, as well as working scientists and laypersons with some knowledge of biology, will find this an interesting and inspiring book, not only about the life and work of a scientist, but the importance of science to society as well." ?Foreword Reviews

"At once a cri de coeur from an eminent scientist on behalf of his profession, Raff's work is also an engaging and informative jaunt through the richly diverse history of evolution as a phenomenon and a course of study." ?Publishers Weekly

"Once We All Had Gills strikes just the right balance of drama, humor, good stories, and science that makes

not only for entertaining reading, but also delivers important insights into evolutionary biology research." ?Quarterly Review of Biology

About the Author

Rudolf A. Raff is James H. Rudy Professor of Biology at Indiana University and one of the founders of the field of evolutionary developmental biology (evo-devo). He is director of the Indiana Molecular Biology Institute, editor-in-chief of Evolution & Development, Guggenheim Fellow, Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He is author of The Shape of Life: Genes, Development, and Evolution of Animal Form and author (with Thom Kaufman) of Embryos, Genes, and Evolution.

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